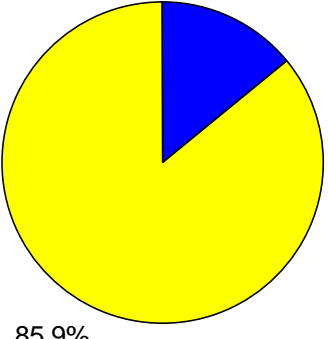


## 13-02-Media Relations

Fund/Agency: 001/13		Office of Public Affairs
Personnel Services	\$133,121	<b>CAPS Percentage of Agency Total</b>  <div>■ Media Relations ■ All Other Agency CAPS</div>
Operating Expenses	\$18,100	
Recovered Costs	(\$30,857)	
Capital Equipment	\$0	
<b>Total CAPS Cost:</b>	<b>\$120,364</b>	
Federal Revenue	\$0	
State Revenue	\$0	
User Fee Revenue	\$0	
Other Revenue	\$0	
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Net CAPS Cost:</b>	<b>\$120,364</b>	
Positions/SYE involved in the delivery of this CAPS	2/2.25	

### ► CAPS Summary

Due to its proximity to the nation's capital, Fairfax County provides information to over 300 media outlets, far more than most local governments. For this reason, media relations demands a considerable amount of time from the Office of Public Affairs (OPA) staff. In addition, the office has been directed to take on the role of County spokesperson which requires an additional commitment to gathering comprehensive information and developing media strategy.

OPA approaches media relations in two ways: proactive and reactive. Every effort is made to proactively tell the County's positive stories and to make use of the media to provide citizens with information on programs and services. In FY 2001, OPA introduced the Futures Features mailing to alert the media about positive County initiatives. In response to media calls about County issues, OPA staff provide accurate, positive and timely information in a constructive way. The individual activities designed to build strong media relations are outlined in the following section.

## *Office of Public Affairs*

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### **Daily 24/Seven Media Response**

The director of OPA serves as a spokesperson for the County with OPA staff filling this role in her absence. The office responds to an average of four media calls each day and has received as many as 14 in a day. Since assuming the role of spokesperson in January of 2001, OPA has managed media coverage of the John Thoburn zoning issue; reapportionment; land use cases; the FY 2002 budget; and the real estate assessments increase.

### **Proactive Media Contacts**

Researches, writes, edits and distributes approximately 298 news and Future Feature releases annually to more than 300 print and broadcast media. The releases allow the agency to inform the media of events and issues affecting the County. They also give the agency another platform to disseminate information to the citizenry.

### **FOIA Meeting Schedule**

Prepares and distributes over 260 FOIA meeting notices to media annually, as mandated by the Virginia Code 2.1-340 through 2.1-346, regarding publishing notices of public meetings.

### **FOIA Requests**

Coordinates responses to all FOIA requests from the media, as mandated by Virginia Code 2.1-340 through 2.1-346.

### **Media Paging System**

Enhances our availability to the media by providing a media paging system which provides the media with access to an OPA information officer 24 hours a day/seven days a week. The system allows the caller to leave a message and page the duty information officer.

### **Media Satisfaction Survey**

To gauge the quality of our media relations efforts, OPA has initiated a media satisfaction survey that is sent annually to any media representative that has more than three contacts with the OPA during the previous 12 months. The survey is evaluated to determine any area of media relations that needs to be improved. In the December 2000 survey, media representatives rated the office superior or above average in all categories related to their contact with OPA staff.

### **News Conferences/Media Events**

Provides support to the Board of Supervisors and County agencies to plan news conferences and media events and ceremonies. For example, OPA produced the media event to launch the County's redesigned Web site.

## **► Method of Service Provision**

Service provided directly by County employees and student interns.

Agency Hours of Operation: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; information officers are available 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

► **Performance/Workload Related Data**

As mentioned, OPA took on the role of spokesperson for Fairfax County on January 1, 2001, six months into FY 2001. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of incoming media calls. Based on the data collected in the first six months of 2001, it is anticipated that OPA will handle 1,040 media calls annually, compared to 479 calls handled in FY 2000. The time spent on each call has also increased from 15 minutes to 21 minutes.

Data indicates that OPA's enhanced proactive media strategy is effective. Based on the first six months of 2001, it is anticipated that OPA will prepare and distribute 290 news releases and 8 Future Features notices to the media, resulting in the placement of approximately 252 positive print media stories annually.

► **Mandate Information**

This CAPS is Federally or State mandated. The percentage of this CAPS' resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 1 - 25%. The specific Federal or State code and a brief description of the code follows:

- Code of Virginia 2.1-340 through 2.1-346 - Virginia Freedom of Information Act.
- The Virginia Freedom of Information Act is the primary State law governing citizen access to records of public entities and to their meetings. This act gives any Virginia citizen and any non-resident representative of a newspaper, radio station, or television station that is circulated in or broadcasts in Virginia the rights to have access to public meetings and to inspect and copy public documents.